Interview with Robert W. Zimmermann

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

ROBERT W. ZIMMERMANN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is June 10, 1992 and this is an interview with Robert W. Zimmermann being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

I wonder if you could give a bit about your background...where you were born, educated, and that type of thing?

ZIMMERMANN: I was born in Chicago and we moved to Minneapolis when I was about ten years old. So I really grew up in Minneapolis finishing grade school there and senior high. I went to the University of Minnesota with a major in economics and political science. From there I went to Harvard Business School and graduated from there in 1942. It was the last full class they ran before the war. From then on until after the war it was special management courses.

Obviously Pearl Harbor took place during that second year. The Navy was very much on the ball and sent the commandant of the First Naval District out to the Harvard Business School the next day, on Monday. An assembly was called and he asked all those who were already committed to ROTC to leave and offered the rest of us instant commissions and the promise that we would all be permitted to graduate. It sounded like a very good

deal so most of us did sign up...no boot camp, nothing. I spent about 4 and a quarter years in the Navy.

Earlier, however, I had been interested in the Foreign Service and consulted with the faculty adviser at the University of Minnesota in 1935 or 1936. His advice was that unless you had private means to forget it. They weren't taking many people at that point and salaries were very poor. His suggestion was to go into international business and then decide whether I wanted to transfer later. So that was one reason why I went on to Harvard Business.

Q: How had you heard about the Foreign Service back in 1935? What had sparked your interest?

ZIMMERMANN: I have no idea. They asked me that on the oral exams. I can only say that I was an avid reader of the National Geographic and things like that. I always had an interest in things relating to foreign matters.

Coming out of the war in 1946, there were still limitations on entering, and I decided that I had better try it. Meanwhile, I went back to Minneapolis after getting out of the Navy and started law school at the University of Minnesota waiting for the results of the exam to come in. I finished two semesters there and enjoyed it thoroughly and was a little sorry to leave. But I had passed the exams and decided to give it a try. And that is where I have been ever since.

I might add that between the two years at Harvard Business we were supposed to work in a private company and write a report on it. That was required. I didn't see where I was going to make much progress punching an adding machine in a McCormick Shipping office somewhere. I had already taken a fair amount of Spanish so I asked whether I might be permitted to go down to the University of Mexico for that summer. They said it was fine

but I would still have to write a report. So I said I would write a report on doing business in Mexico.

I took business courses, the professor didn't come half the time so I didn't come much of the other half. I got the text books, went home and wrote the report. They decided they liked it so much that they published it in the Harvard Business Review.

Q: How about during the Navy, did you get involved with international affairs at all?

ZIMMERMANN: No, not at all. We went up to Dartmouth for preliminary courses in navigation and things like that, which I never used. I was pulled out of that early and sent down to the Navy Yard for ordnance training ...everything from a pistol to a 16 inch rifle. I was pulled out of that early with another Harvard Business School graduate to set up production and inventory controls at the Naval Magazine at Bellevue, which was between Naval Research and Bowling Field. I elicited from the Commandant the agreement that I would be allowed to go to sea in six months. Everyone was very patriotic in those days. He said, “Oh yeah, fine, if everything is doing well.” So I put in for a transfer. After five months we had the thing going. In fact it was the only fuse loading plant the Navy had except for a small one up in Connecticut and a big one down in Macon, Georgia.

I heard nothing for about two months so I asked him if I could go up to the Navy Yard. He said, “Sure, take the official car.” It took me exactly twenty minutes to find out what happened to my petition. He had called up a friend and asked him to pigeon holed the transfer request. I got back madder than a hornet and since I wasn't going to make the Navy a career, I accused him to his face of not living up to his word. He was a wild Irishman. He lifted up the desk on one side and slammed it down again and said, “Get out.” From then on we were great buddies, we knew where each of us stood. For the rest of the war I never got out. With each new Commandant I put in a request for transfer. I even volunteered for submarine duty. That is how desperate I was.

Finally I decided to relax and enjoy Washington. I met my wife here. Her father was number two in the Cuban Embassy. We were married in Ottawa shortly after I was out of the Navy.

Q: You came into the Foreign Service in 1947. Did you have a beginning officer class and all that?

ZIMMERMANN: It was the usual 101 beginning officer class.

Q: Can you give an impression of what your class was like? What was its outlook?

ZIMMERMANN: Gosh, I don't have any clear impression of that. We were just a group of people pretty eager to get started.

Q: I suppose most were veterans?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, most of them, if not all.

Q: Your first assignment was to where?

ZIMMERMANN: Lima, Peru.

Q: You were there from 1947-50.

ZIMMERMANN: Right.

Q: Had you worked on Spanish?

ZIMMERMANN: My Spanish wasn't bad. After all, my wife was Spanish speaking. I had taken Spanish at university and later at the University of Mexico.

We were doing a lot of rotation in those days, and I started out in the political section. Then the inspectors came through and they said it was time to go down to the consular section,

so I did. By the same token, I asked for economic work at the next post and that is why I got Bangkok.

Q: In Lima, from your vantage point, what was the political situation in Lima when you were there?

ZIMMERMANN: It was reasonably quiet at first. Bustamante was president at the time. It was, as it is today, a country of extreme financial wealth and extreme poverty. The capital, itself, was surrounded by poor little settlements and thrown together shacks and that sort of thing by the Indians who came down from the Andes, many of whom, incidentally, quickly developed TB because of the large lungs they developed in the Andes. When they came down those lungs weren't used to capacity and TB quickly developed.

That began to change as the APRA party increasingly pushed for power with Haya de la Torre at the head.

Q: This party was the A... how do you spell it?

ZIMMERMANN: APRA. It was much more to the left at that time then it is today.

While I was there we had the first revolt by the APRA party which succeeded in getting the support of a small part of the military. It was probably one of the few battles between cruisers and tanks. The cruisers didn't have enough fuel except to circle around in the middle of the harbor at Callao and the tanks were shooting at them and vice versa.

That revolt was unsuccessful but it was the occasion for Haya de la Torre to seek asylum in the Colombian Embassy where he remained for somewhere around seven years before the Peruvian government allowed him to leave.

Then things continued to be rather quiet until the Odria revolt which began at Arequipa, where all successful coups up to that time began. General Odria was successful and they threw out Bustamante.

Q: This was when you were still there?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, we were still there.

Odria took over with a military government, obviously.

Q: How did the Embassy react to this sort of thing?

ZIMMERMANN: By that time I was in the consular section. I don't recall being too privy to what was going on. We did have staff meetings, but not very often. We had a very strange ambassador. He used to call a staff meeting and put a huge melon on his desk and tell us to look at it and just imagine what this country can really do when it tries, and that was the end of the staff meeting.

Q: This is Prentice Cooper?

ZIMMERMANN: This is Prentice Cooper.

Q: He was a political ambassador.

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, from the “Boss” Crump machines in Memphis. He was quite a character. In fact articles used to appear about him in the New York Times and Time magazine and these would be surreptitiously circulated around the entire Embassy. I must say that the esprit de corps in that Embassy, because of him, and the feeling against him, was the highest I have ever seen any where.

Q: Was it that he just wasn't doing anything or was he getting involved in the wrong things or taking wrong turns?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, he loved to be pictured in the press with opposition leader Haya de la Torre before he pulled the revolution. In fact he used to call in the PAO and ream him out in his office every morning if there wasn't a picture of him on the front page of the local newspapers. Some people have said that if he had just gone home after the major earthquake, that happened before I got there, when he went in on mules with blankets, etc., he would have been great, but he didn't.

After that we had Harold Tittmann who was a real prince.

Q: He was a professional officer?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes he was.

Q: I realize you were down in the consular section, not exactly pulling the strings of policy, but did you get any feeling for what were our American interests there at the time?

ZIMMERMANN: My feeling at that time was that we were trying to make headway with the Peruvian military, which had not been all that friendly during World War II.

Q: I always think of them with their German helmet and goose step and that sort of thing.

ZIMMERMANN: Exactly. We had some very large military offices and missions down there working with the Peruvian military. We were also concerned, but not as concerned as we would be today, with the differences in income. To illustrate, at one point my wife and I were traveling in the north of Peru. We had been invited to spend the night at a very large sugar plantation that was owned by the extremely wealthy Gildermiester family. It was run by a young relative. I don't know if he was a son, nephew or grandson. He was a very accomplished violinist, very good looking, tall. He took us around, and the peasants would come and kneel in front of him. He had jackboots on and carried a long whip...we never saw him whip the people, but used it on the ground next to them. It was that sort of thing, not very pleasant to behold. So you did have those extremes.

We were also interested in preserving U.S. mining interests. The U.S. had major investments up at Cerro de Pasco which were sometimes a bone of contention with the Peruvian government and people.

We also did fishing off the coast, but that was long before the 200 mile argument started.

I can't think of anything else.

Q: Then you say you made your application to get some economic training and they whipped you all the way over to Bangkok. You were there from 1950-52.

ZIMMERMANN: That is right.

Q: What was the situation as you saw it in Thailand at that time?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, it was recovering from Japanese occupation. A bridge had just been reconstructed across the river. They were trying to pull themselves together. That was the main thing. We had people working with them on rice culture, trying to improve the dry land rice, developing hydroelectric power and establishing a reliable electricity supply. Also we were trying to reestablish American influence in Southeast Asia. This was the one country in the area that had never been a colony of anybody else. It was a great place to be working.

Q: What were you doing as an economic officer there?

ZIMMERMANN: I was doing some financial reporting and worried about radio communications...we had special permits from the Thai government that I was responsible for keeping up and getting renewed. Beyond that, it was mainly trade and commerce more than anything else, and running end-use checks to prevent diversion of goods to communist users.

Q: Were we basically trying to find markets for Thai goods, or were we trying to find markets for American goods?

ZIMMERMANN: We were trying to find markets for American goods. We weren't too much worried about Thai exports. Tourism was growing, but was not all that great at that point. Jim Thompson was developing his famous Thai silk. We knew Jim very well.

Road construction was another project of the ICA (International Communications Agency) mission. Paved roads didn't lead very far out of Bangkok in those days. They hadn't started filling in the canals yet. They complain about traffic today, but I think it was just as bad then, there were fewer roads. You had more of the foot pedal three wheel vehicles (samlor).

Q: How did you find dealing with the Thai officials?

ZIMMERMANN: I found them very pleasant to deal with. I worked largely with the head of the commercial section in the Foreign Office, Thanat Khoman, who later became prime minister. He was also ambassador here in Washington. A very able and shrewd man who was most pleasant. He was open and frank, and my principal contact, although there were others.

We had a big AID program there. In fact, another man at the Embassy and I went up on an expedition in the north while the AID people were trying to find a site for a dam. This was a famous trip down the Mai Ping River on the Burmese border, stopping now and then to take rock samples. We had armed guards along because there was a lot of banditry along there. It was a fabulous trip, a classic one that nobody does anymore. It is too difficult to arrange.

Q: What about the impact of the Korean War which started in June 1950?

ZIMMERMANN:Aside from the increased general insecurity in the area, I don't remember it having a great deal of an impact on the general public at that point. We felt much more the impact of events in Cambodia and Laos and Vietnam. There was a great deal of banditry and roving armed bands during that period. We didn't have Dien Bien Phu until later, but it was still very difficult. The Ambassador refused to allow anybody to go to Angkor Wat because the last time the plane had been shot up on landing and the previous time a bus going from the airport in Siem Reap was shot up. Things finally relaxed somewhat and Jerry Stricker and I drove over on our own with the Ambassador's permission. But we were about the first ones from the Embassy allowed for some time. However, we were not allowed to go outside of the central complex of Angkor without permission of the Cambodian government and a military escort.

It was an unstable and uncertain period. Saigon, however was more directly involved. My wife went over on one of the military planes that went over to Saigon for R&R. They had luncheon with the other friends who had gone and the day after a bomb was thrown into that same restaurant. Those things were going on. We were concerned in Bangkok and followed the events, but were not in the middle of them.

Q: What about China? Was the Embassy spending a lot of time looking at developments in China?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes. We had one officer, Jerry Stricker, who worried mostly about China and Ed Stanton, the Ambassador, was an old China hand. Between them they did most of the Chinese reporting. Of particular interest was the large Chinese population in Bangkok.

Q: Did you get any feel from talking to Stricker or from ambassador staff meetings about what they felt the impact of China on Thailand might be?

ZIMMERMANN: The Thais were always concerned about Chinese efforts to increase their influence and were very careful. This was nothing new; it is what they had been doing their

entire history. However, I don't recall any instance of serious problems with the Chinese community in Thailand in that period. But they kept a very close eye on them.

Q: You had Edwin Stanton as Ambassador. What was his style of operation?

ZIMMERMANN: He was low key, very knowledgeable, demanding, of course, but in a very pleasant way.

Q: You felt you were under a competent ambassador?

ZIMMERMANN: Oh, absolutely. No question.

Q: You sort of tasted different areas, your next post was to London where you served from 1953-56.

ZIMMERMANN: I might add on the Bangkok side that again there was a revolution. This was the one in which they sought to throw Pibul Songgram, the Prime Minister, out. It was on the occasion of AID delivering a dredge to the Thai government. The dredge was destined to keep the channel deep enough for larger vessels to come up the river. It was a big occasion with priests chanting, etc. The diplomatic corps was lined up on one side. The Prime Minister had gone aboard to inspect the dredge along with the head of AID and the Ambassador.

They were followed two minutes later by a detachment of marines who “arrested” the Prime Minister and requested the head of AID and our Ambassador to leave. We were all told to disperse. I was with Rolland Bushner. As we were going back to our car a marine came over and shoved a machine gun in our stomachs. We were told we could not go that way. We did not feel like arguing.

The city was full of shooting through the next day. Our house was hit about fifteen times by bullets...both strafing aircraft and marines coming up through the rice patties across the main highway. We were in the downstairs “john” with the kids so we would have more

walls between us and the shooting. It was a pretty sticky time. We were told to stay home and not try to get to the Embassy.

We immediately met at the Embassy after the ceremony to discuss our observations of the takeover and then were instructed to go home and not move until called. The phone worked most the time, curiously, I recall. But by the following evening we were able to move around town to see what the damage was.

Q: What was the general attitude towards this revolution?

ZIMMERMANN: It is hard to say what the people really thought about it. This was a naval marine operation. They had Pibul as a prisoner on board a naval vessel in the middle of the river, but finally let him off as revolutionary support diminished. I didn't get any particular feeling from the people, from our servants or anyone else. It seemed to be viewed as one of those things the military did from time to time.

Q: How about as far as the Embassy was concerned?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, I think the Embassy didn't want a lot of changes. We were getting along very well with the current officials in terms of our operations, desires and commercial and political relations.

Q: Did you find that there was a change as far as your work was concerned?

ZIMMERMANN: No, Pibul came back into power. It only lasted for a few days. There wasn't any basic change while we were there.

Q: Well, then what were you doing in this London assignment?

ZIMMERMANN: In London I worked on the South Asia/Far East desk. The Embassy was set up, as you know, like a small State Department with a South Asia/Far East section, a Near East section, Latin America...which I picked up because nobody else spoke Spanish

and I was interested in keeping a hand in... and there were divisions for internal political reporting as well. I was the junior officer and the number two to Art Ringwalt, who was an old China hand. We covered everything from Afghanistan on.

Much time was consumed by liaison with the Foreign Office. I would say three or four days out of five I would be at the Foreign Office for part of the day, talking with desk people and being permitted to read some of their despatches, coming back and reporting to Washington.

The Korean War was in full bloom and Dien Bien Phu, I believe, took place during that time. It was a very busy time. We were especially worried about several Americans being held by the Chinese Communists. We were working through the British trying to get them out.

Q: The British had relations with the Chinese and we didn't.

ZIMMERMANN: One interesting little vignette. While I was in London I had a bad case of sciatica and the doctor ordered me to get out of the dampness for a couple of weeks. I went to Italy. One evening, I was walking around Venice just looking at book stores. There was one filled with a lot of communist books. Suddenly I heard behind me American voices commenting on the books. I turned around because something they had said had indicated they had just come out of China. The two were priests we had very recently succeeded in getting out. I introduced myself, noting that I had been working in London on their case through the British. We knew they had left, but here they were in Venice.

I also asked for and did Latin America liaison. Part of this was during the time of Arbenz in Guatemala. I was very good friends, from earlier days in Lima, of the Guatemalan Ambassador who confided in me a number of times.

Q: Talking about Arbenz. This was the CIA's one major coup. He was a leftist who was gotten rid of certainly with American intelligence assistance.

ZIMMERMANN: So I have heard. I think Ambassador Peurifoy wrote a great deal about this.

Q: I assume you would talk to the British on this. What was the reaction there to this kind of action?

ZIMMERMANN: You mean the British reaction, the official British Foreign Office reaction? For one thing it is not their primary sphere of influence so they generally followed our lead. But I think they thought we always meddled too much and just didn't let things take their course.

Q: What about the British Foreign Office people. Did our two foreign services mesh well as far as working together at this particular period of time?

ZIMMERMANN: Oh, I think we had very good relations with them and with the Colonial Office as well. We had excellent relations. Ringwalt was operating on a somewhat higher level than I did, but we were both down there all the time and always seemed welcome. The same was true in the Near East. Joe Palmer was doing the Near East when we got there and then Evan Wilson.

Q: Were there any points of conflict between the British and United States that you were aware of in East Asian problems?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, there was always the argument of recognition of China. But it was done on rather an intellectual plane. There were problems, obviously, that developed around people like Krishna Menon, as well there might be.

Q: Krishna Menon was Minister of Defense of India and loved to stick needles into the Americans and was intensely disliked by most anybody who dealt with him.

ZIMMERMANN: I well remember going with Art Ringwalt to a lecture one evening in London on something about South Asia. Krishna Menon was there. He walked right over to me and started talking to me in a very friendly fashion. It quickly turned out that he thought I was the new Minister from Lebanon! As soon as he found out I was from the US, he abruptly walked off.

I think all those discussions with the British were on an intellectual basis, I don't recall any sort of real...well, problems that stemmed from those differences, yes...

Q: The British recognized China and we didn't and for many years this was a major policy decision on our part. At the time did you get any feel that the British were getting a lot more out of having recognized China?

ZIMMERMANN: No, I didn't. And I don't think the British thought so either.

Q: What I gather was that it really didn't make much difference. China was going to do their own thing.

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, that is the impression I had. If I remember right, I think some of the British were privately saying, “Well, what good did it do us?”

Q: They almost had to let it run its course, which took about 30 years.

ZIMMERMANN: They had made their move, we made ours and it didn't make much difference in the end. However, it did give us a channel to talk to the Chinese in terms of those Americans who were incarcerated. But that might have been done through some other country, too, if the British hadn't been able to assist.

Q: Did you get much feedback from the Department?

ZIMMERMANN: Not a whole lot of feedback. Obviously we got into the annual thing about agendas at the UN and all that. Those were largely instructions and we discussed them

with the British. But not much feedback. It was largely reporting on our side of what the British told us. That was the basic thing.

Q: The Ambassador there was Winthrop Aldrich and I know it was a huge organization there, but did you get any feel of how he operated and was evaluated by those who worked for him?

ZIMMERMANN: My impression was that everybody looked to the DCM more than to Aldrich. The DCM was really running the operation. He ran the staff meetings and everything else. Aldrich was seldom there. The DCM at first was Julius Holmes and then Walt Butterworth.

Q: So you had two very competent professionals.

ZIMMERMANN: Absolutely, and everybody looked directly to them. I just had no real personal feeling about Aldrich and I don't think many did.

Q: You left London in 1956 and went back to the State Department where you served for three years, to 1959. What were you doing?

ZIMMERMANN: My first assignment on paper was to go to New Guinea. I wasn't too happy because we had three small children at that point and the post report said the bubonic plague hadn't occurred for the last two years or something like that. I didn't object, in those days you didn't object. But Walt Butterworth, the DCM, did. He said that was not the assignment for me. I don't know all the details but I know he did talk to Walter Robertson, who was Assistant Secretary for the Far East, about it and the end result was that the assignment was changed and I went back as special assistant for SEATO affairs.

I was under Ken Young in the Southeast Asia Office as the first guy worrying full-time about SEATO. Then George Abbott came in as a senior special assistant. When George left I became the special assistant for SEATO affairs before going to the War College.

It was a frustrating job in many ways.

Q: I was going to say SEATO was sort of one of those treaties that was there but nobody could quite figure out what it was.

ZIMMERMANN: Nobody wanted to put any flesh on it that amounted to anything. They wanted to do a lot of talking about it, and we certainly did, but there wasn't much to back it up. Eventually it ended up with a big headquarters in Bangkok. I suspect it may have served some real psychological purpose, but to what extent, it is difficult to say. We spent a good deal of time trying to set up connections with CENTO, which never really got very far off the ground either.

Q: At that time how did you view some of the members? I am thinking about Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Pakistan, France. Who were sort of the strong supporters and who were the weak sisters in all of this?

ZIMMERMANN: At that time, the Philippines was a very strong supporter. The Thai liked it, but I am not sure how much skepticism was behind all that. I think the Philippines thought more of its possibilities. Of course ANZUS was there anyway, as far as Australia and New Zealand were concerned. Pakistan was sort of standoffish about it as soon as it found out it didn't mean big bucks, and in any case it also had CENTO.

Baghdad pulled out of the Baghdad Pact after a while and it became CENTO. That connection with SEATO never really got very far. At that point it was interesting because Hermann Eilts was doing the Baghdad Pact while I was doing SEATO.

Q: Supposedly the link was Pakistan wasn't it?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes.

Q: Were you there when they were forming SEATO?

ZIMMERMANN: No, I came afterwards.

Q: Because there is a lot of controversy over who put Pakistan into SEATO.

ZIMMERMANN: I can't comment on that. I really don't know.

Q: What was the feeling about the support of Secretary Dulles toward SEATO?

ZIMMERMANN: One had the feeling that this was something that he looked at very carefully once a year at the annual meeting of Foreign Ministers. That may be a little unfair. We did do some intelligence exchanges through SEATO but I don't think any of them were things that couldn't have been done otherwise.

Q: Did you feel a little bit out in left field as far as Southeast Asian affairs was concerned?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, I think so. It was a good observation point to know what was going on all throughout that area. But I did have the feeling that I was out of the mainstream of events.

You were asking about support. I think the British were pretty good about backing us up on this. I think it was one of those things: “Well, the Americans want it, fine, we will support it and maybe it isn't all that bad of an idea.” That sort of thing.

Q: How about the French role? The French had already pulled out of Vietnam. I can't think of any territory they had around there.

ZIMMERMANN: They still maintained a very strong interest in Laos and Cambodia. Maybe they pulled out but they still tried to maintain influence and were very jealous of any attempts we made to increase our influence in the area. I frankly don't remember much on the French side, either plus or minus re SEATO.

Q: Your next assignment was to the War College for a year. How did you find the War College?

ZIMMERMANN: I found it a great way to get to know the military better. Of course most of us had served in the military, but even so, these were eager, upcoming officers, intelligent guys and very interesting. As far as the subject matter I am not sure there was a great deal added by the War College. It was suggested that we were there largely to provide a balancing civilian viewpoint and background.

Q: Again and again I have heard this phrase that essentially we were put in there really for them to draw on us. Also it was a generation thing because most of us who came in up through the early sixties, a good number of us had served our time in the military. Whereas the military had very little contact with the State side.

ZIMMERMANN: I am not saying it was a bad thing, just stating that we seemed to be there for that purpose rather than learning things ourselves. Although we obviously did in terms of military organization and military outlook, etc.

Q: Then you went from the War College to a good solid stint in Madrid. What were you doing in Madrid?

ZIMMERMANN: I was the deputy chief of the political section when I went. Later I became political counselor. We were there for many years, probably too many, but we were hardly going to object. We found it very interesting. My wife, particularly, having been Cuban, her grandfather having been born in Spain, etc.

Q: What was the political situation? You came in 1960.

ZIMMERMANN: The construction of the bases had just been finished a few years earlier.

Q: These were American bases?

ZIMMERMANN: Torrejon, Zaragoza and Moron. Rota was there, but had not become a major installation yet. We didn't have the nukes coming in, that came later.

It was always the constant question of keeping in touch with the opposition as much as you could without annoying the Franco government too much, combined with attempts to push in subtle ways the government to more openness. It was a period of considerable economic aid and military aid to the extent that a lot of Spanish opposition became annoyed at the extent of military aid. They thought it supported Franco's continuing rule.

Q: You talk about the opposition. What was the situation? Was there an opposition within the governmental structure?

ZIMMERMANN: The government structure wasn't monolithic. There were degrees of support for Franco.

Let me say something about at least one opposition leader, not an important one but one who made this comment that reflected the feelings of a wide spectrum: “We don't like Franco, but if the transition can be carried out in a peaceful manner, it will have been worth all the years under Franco.”

There were many people who thought that. But more rabid opposition wanted Franco out, period. They thought all our economic and military aid did nothing but support the regime.

A lot of this led to ambivalent attitudes toward Spain by the rest of the world. The Spanish regime was still sort of a pariah in parts of Europe, especially to the labor parties in Scandinavia, Italy, England and France.

But I think the US opening, obviously done to obtain the bases, did in the end wear down some of this opposition, soften it. Spain did not fully become an accepted member of Western Europe until many years later when Spain finally became a member of NATO. That wasn't until well after Franco disappeared in the fall of 1975.

It was a very interesting period. We had contacts not only with the opposition, but also with some of the ultra supporters of the Falange.

Q: How could you characterize the people you were meeting? Were these really hard-nose fascist types?

ZIMMERMANN: Some of them, yes. That type of person with very few exceptions was probably in second and third echelon positions, not in top positions. Many of the top cabinet officers, obviously, were supporters of Franco or they wouldn't have been there. But they tended to be quite able people, some of them basically technicians more than politicians or political advocates of one side or another. People like Lopez Rodo who was basically a technician, a very fine economist. He did a lot for Spain, bringing it out of the economic basement.

This was a period when Spain was changing very rapidly. I remember early in the first year (1960) taking drives outside on a Sunday with the kids around Madrid and you didn't have to go very far to see people still cultivating the fields with Roman ploughs. Two years later there were tractors everywhere unless you were way off in the hinterland. By the end of my tour it was hard to find a Roman plough except at an antique shop. It was a period of great changes.

Q: Could our policy be summed up in one word, bases, as far as Spain was concerned, or were there other considerations?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, the bases go back to strategic problems with Russia, obviously. That was the name of the game. I think the only reason we were concerned about bringing Spain back into the Western community, so to speak, was for that reason...to keep Spain on our side. There was concern about Spain's orientation. There was a saying that Africa begins at the Pyrenees, not at the Mediterranean. There was concern that Spain really wasn't going to be a partner of the Western coalition.

I think that overshadowed any other consideration.

Q: Did you have contact with the Communist Party?

ZIMMERMANN: No, that was done through another office.

Q: Did you have any feeling for what you were getting from our cousins about where they stood? Communist parties by this time were beginning to develop distinct characteristics. The French was a real tool of the Soviet Union. The Italians were sort of going their own way.

ZIMMERMANN: The Spanish Communist Party was pretty well decimated by the Franco machine. They were there, yes, but they were not a big noise. They worked largely on the labor side and some of the Socialist parts of the labor movement tended to be more communist than socialist. You also had a lot of returning exiles from Russia at that point that were being subjected to an interrogation program.

I would say that more noise came from the Basque Separatists, that sort of thing, and the Catalan separatists, who really had nothing to do with the Communists.

Just as an aside, one person described the difference between the Basque and the Catalan movements: “Catalan separatism is an intellectual thing; the Basque movement is emotional. Therefore the Catalan will never carry it through, because they know they are too tied to the Spanish economy.” Barcelona up to that point had been much more of an industrial center than Madrid...certainly as a banking, publishing and textile center. But that has somewhat changed.

Q: How did you find the political section? Was there a problem of getting sort of smothered and coopted by the wealthy upper class?

ZIMMERMANN: There was always that problem and that was an accusation that was leveled against Ambassador Lodge, of course. That is not original with me. But that really wasn't a problem down the line. The upper wealthy class were really more interested in the Ambassador and DCM than anyone else.

Q: What was John Davis Lodge like? What was your impression of him.

ZIMMERMANN: At one point I wondered whether I could take a full tour. Lodge loved to sing “Madrid” at every party; his conduct at staff meetings was imperious, not really listening, trying to put people down. At that point he and the DCM were not even talking to each other. I can't really remember very many specifics. Anyway, he left six months after my arrival.

Q: He was replaced by Tony Biddle. What was he like?

ZIMMERMANN: He was an absolute prince. He had the ability to be friends with everybody. He wasn't there very long, as you well know. He went home and died of cancer. You may remember that the heads of the Spanish government at that time moved up to San Sebastian every summer for two or three months. The Ambassador rented a house there and we would rotate as assistants to him...one secretary and one assistant. I was fortunate to have spent a month up there with him, which was absolutely delightful.

He was a great raconteur telling about his experiences with the exile governments in London during the war and that sort of thing. His death was a great shock.

Q: He was replaced by Bob Woodward. How did he operate?

ZIMMERMANN: A top pro. There was no question. He was extremely knowledgeable, careful, exacting. Just excellent. There is no other way of putting it.

Q: Having been an ambassador three times previously. Also he had been Assistant Secretary for ARA.

ZIMMERMANN: That is right. It was a great pleasure to serve under him.

Q: After a while, you were there so long you had one more, Angie Biddle Duke. How about him?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, he wouldn't let me out. He was a little like my old Naval Commander. At this point I could see that I was spending too much time in Madrid. I also had been fingered to be political counselor in Venezuela under Bernbaum. Finally Bernbaum said he couldn't wait for Angie to release me so the whole thing went up in the air. I finally came back to Washington with no specific assignment and Joe Palmer took me on in the Director General's office as assistant for presidential appointments.

Q: What were you doing there?

ZIMMERMANN: Presidential appointments.

Q: Could you give me a feel for this? You were there from 1966-69. This was high Johnson period. Just to get a feel for the goings on. What type of operations were you involved in?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, for one thing I had charge of a whole group of women GS's who ran the Great Seal, titles and commissions, etc. They kept trying to increase their staff saying they couldn't do all this work without five more people. I had decided to cut back, not add. I couldn't see what they needed all those people for. We finally did get the office down to a little more reasonable size.

The other thing was doing incessant lists of possible career people for presidential appointments which then went through Joe Palmer and later John Steeves, and up

through Bill Crockett, Under Secretary for Administration, and his successor, Idar Rimestad. I worked much more with Rimestad than Crockett. This was a very frustrating period. I also worked a lot with George Springsteen, who was in Ball's office. That is where I would pick up most of the rumors about what really was going on in terms of candidates for various positions.

I wrote papers why a particular career candidate would be good for a specific post and then list alternates. One often had the feeling of “So what?” in the end. It probably hasn't changed much today.

Q: Did you have contact with the White House side?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, we had, but that was very guarded, particularly on their side.

Q: At the time were you getting things from old hands? Was the Johnson White House much different than the Kennedy White House or from the Eisenhower White House on this matter, or was it pretty much business as usual?

ZIMMERMANN: Basically business as usual. But there was a different approach. The Kennedy approach was very interesting. I don't know how much this was Kennedy or some of his bushy tailed supporters who were really interested in the third world and wanted to go there as ambassadors. I think it was the one time when we had a lot of political appointees in emerging countries in Africa instead of always in Western Europe, etc. In fact, at that point we were getting some career people in Paris, etc.

So from that point of view it was different, but the operation wasn't. It was quite a frustrating assignment.

Q: I assume it was the matter of writing up the qualifications of people, sending them over and finding out that they...

ZIMMERMANN: That is right, we worked largely with Senior Assignments. Then the list would go to Steeves and finally to George Springsteen. I would get more information from George Springsteen under Ball than I would get from most anybody else.

Q: Ball was the Under Secretary.

ZIMMERMANN: George and I had a very good relationship. We knew what we could tell each other, I think. With John Steeves it became a little more difficult because there was friction between Rimestad and John Steeves. I got along with them both and at times found myself being in the bridge position, which isn't always very nice. But I very much liked John Steeves, admired him in many ways, but he was very different from Rimestad's go, go sort of position.

Q: How would the Director General and Under Secretary for Management get into a difference over who to send forward?

ZIMMERMANN: I never knew exactly what those differences were, how they came about. I never knew that. I think probably it stemmed largely from Steeves trying to push career people and running into Rimestad's desire to meet pressures from the White House and the Hill. I think John was trying to play the career game and help out the Service as much as he could.

Q: Then you went for a relatively short tour to Lisbon, as Deputy Chief of Mission.

ZIMMERMANN: That was largely a question of base negotiations...also keeping track of the opposition. Salazar was still in power. He died while we were there. Caetano came in with not much change in atmosphere.

Q: Salazar was pretty much out of it by that time?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, physically. He was still there in that nobody did much without getting a nod from him, even if it was a sick nod.

But the name of the game was base negotiations.

Q: I gather the Azores...

ZIMMERMANN: That is the largest base.

Q: That is the whole relationship.

ZIMMERMANN: That is right. Only in this case, of course, Portugal was a member of NATO.

Q: How did we feel about Portugal being a member of NATO? It is hard to remember that Portugal is in NATO.

ZIMMERMANN: It was there, that is about it. It came in largely as the result of the war time operations. It didn't add much to NATO except for bases, but that was a great deal.

Q: You say bases, were their other bases?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, it was basically Lajes, but we did have some separate Navy operations.

Q: Lajes is the one on the Azores?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, we had nothing really on the mainland. We did have, of course, in Spain and Portugal, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which were important. But the base negotiations had been thrown off track because of problems with India and Goa and later with Angola and Mozambique. The Portuguese felt we had failed to support them in the way they thought we should support them as an ally. Never mind the fact that similar

support was not coming from the other allies either. The leverage was with the United States because we were the ones wanting the base.

Negotiations dragged on with no new formal agreement, just allowing the old agreement to continue informally. We operated under that arrangement without any formal extension for many years. In fact it wasn't until after the revolution in 1974 that there was a formal renewal of the agreement.

Q: With the situation in Africa, you had Mozambique and Angola...this is the time of decolonization...did you find yourself, the proponents of the Portuguese and sort of fighting the proponents of anti-colonialism?

ZIMMERMANN: There was no meeting of the minds with the Portuguese government, whatsoever. I have done a certain amount of work on this recently so have been reviewing a lot of the documents at State and my memory is fairly fresh on this.

We would say, “We are really on your side. We don't want you to get out tomorrow. Voting on the future doesn't necessarily mean immediate independence.” This was the line that we took with the Portuguese and I think quite honestly. We said, “To preserve your position you are going to have to start along the line of reform, both political and economic.” Their response was always, “Yes, yes, but we are not ready yet.” And what little came from the Portuguese was always far too late and far too little. It really upset relations very deeply for a long time.

Q: You would be sending in the Portuguese side and the African Bureau would...I mean this battle of Africa has gone on for...first with Algeria and France. Did you find yourself sort of carrying on what was essentially a pretty unpopular policy elsewhere?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, it was unpopular there, but it was our position, and there was no question of disagreement with it. It wasn't just a question of following orders, we all believed in it. To go back a little, Soapy Williams made one of his famous trips to Africa

while I was still in Madrid. He went down to Rio Muni and Fernando Po, when they were still Spanish provinces. I was sent down to go with him and monitor the visit. Nothing untoward really took place; it was a good visit and no friction developed in either place. It was an interesting experience. I had also been down with the military attach# to Ifni in the Spanish Sahara, which was also fascinating because the Spanish Foreign Legion was still in full flower. In fact I stood with the attach# taking the day-end salute from the Foreign Legion! It was very moving in a way. You didn't believe in what they were doing, but it was impressive.

This gave me further background on Africa as on the War College trip. I chose the African trip because at that time it was the one area I hadn't gotten near before. Q: How about Kissinger and his influence with the policy at that time? This was when he was National Security Adviser. I assume that he saw everything in West verses East and when the chips were down this policy prevailed?

ZIMMERMANN: Oh yes, I think there was no doubt about that. I mean you could say we were interested in economic development in Portugal, but the country had been kept so under wraps by Salazar the Portuguese weren't even permitted to participate in the jazz age. It was a very undeveloped country in many ways.

Q: Ridgway Knight was your ambassador. What was his method of operation?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, I will tell you one thing, he didn't need a DCM, which made life difficult at times. It was one reason I was delighted to go on to Barcelona afterwards.

Q: Was this a matter of his doing all the operations of the Embassy?

ZIMMERMANN: That is really more or less correct. There was no real division, although I am not sure he would see it that way, but all I can do is note that the inspector's that he did not need a DCM. When I left the position was abolished for the time he was

ambassador. He brought Diego Asencio up and insisted on calling him the DCM, although the Department didn't recognize that for a while. It was very difficult.

Q: It must have been difficult to be left sort of dangling there.

ZIMMERMANN: He thought I wasn't doing anything and I had the feeling that every time I was doing something, something else had already happened. It was that sort of problem. I think there just wasn't enough for him to do. The main issue was trying to renew the base agreements and that was a very slow operation. There wasn't much on the plus side. Beyond that there wasn't really a whole lot.

Q: So how did your transfer to go to Barcelona come about?

ZIMMERMANN: The inspectors came through, I actually knew the chief inspector, John Hill, who had been on the opposite end of the line on SEATO affairs in Bangkok when I was in Washington. John Hill recognized the situation and suggested I request a change of assignment. The Consulate General in Barcelona was not an ideal place to go, but it suddenly came open and they were looking for somebody urgently. We loved Spain and certainly knew Spain after six years there. I think Macomber wanted a consular officer in there, but eventually I went over to Madrid and talked to Bob Hill and he said, “Yes, I do want you up there.” It was a very enjoyable four years.

Q: You were Consul General in Barcelona from 1970-74. What was the situation in Barcelona? How different was it from Madrid?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, let's remember that this is the end of the Franco regime. Franco died just a little over a year after we left. One of my ambitions in Spain was to be there when that transition took place, having spent that much time in Spain. But I never succeeded.

The situation was that the conditions had loosened considerably, certainly economically, and even to some extent, politically. It had been a gradual thing over the years. There were still hardliners, Franco supporters, in Barcelona, but they were not as evident as they were at an earlier period in Barcelona. The Catalan Separatists were still noticeable. This was an intellectual thing more than a strong emotional thing. There were a few evidences of physical violence once in a while, but not like in the Basque area.

The US was quite welcome, I think, always. The Sixth Fleet was in there all the time. There were the usual relatively minor problems with the Sixth Fleet when all the sailors came ashore. But on the whole they were welcomed.

It was a period, perhaps, of declining importance for Catalonia economically. A lot of their industry, textiles specifically, had become very antiquated and needed a great deal of modernization...I am not sure it has ever taken place. Publishing was going very well. It was one of the great publishing centers of the Latin speaking world.

The people were rather different, I think. And we were in a good position to observe because, after all, we had had six years in Madrid and then many connections and friends in Catalonia.

One small example of a difference. People at a large cocktail party in Madrid would say, “Oh, you must come out to our finca for the weekend. We will be in touch.” You never hear from them again. In Catalonia they call the next day and say, “When is it convenient to come out.” They really want you. There is a great difference in approach there. Both of them were very friendly and very nice. Perhaps it was a little harder with our background in Madrid to get to know the Catalans well, but once we did they were very good and very loyal friends. My wife goes back now and some of those friends continue to pick her up at the airport. My oldest son married a girl from Barcelona although it wasn't until after we were back here.

It was also interesting, and perhaps untypical from a Consul General's point of view that successive ambassadors in Madrid, I believe, recognized my long experience in Spain. Therefore I had a relatively free hand in my methods of operation in Barcelona. I was very careful to keep them informed, of course, of everything that was going on.

There was a very active binational center in Barcelona which was very useful. But also, the Sixth Fleet was a great tool because it brought in a great show band which at that point was at its zenith under Admiral Miller which led to an interesting incident, if you are interested. It also was a great forum for entertaining all the provincial governors and military governors in my district. When a Fleet carrier was in, it would go out in the Mediterranean and mount exercises to which we could invite the officials. We would invite the Ambassador or the DCM from the Embassy to come up as well. These were highly successful events. They kept us in very close touch with the military authorities in the Barcelona district as well as the civil officials.

The one incident I started to refer to earlier was that the show band was such a good thing that the Admiral of the Sixth Fleet would want to mount a performance every time the Fleet came to Barcelona, which was about every three months. That was great the first couple of times. But after that even Barcelona got a little saturated and also it was hard to find halls because the Navy could not charge admission, and most halls wanted to charge us for the use of it.

Earlier we had a little incident involving one of the big helicopter carriers that had come in from Vietnam. The Marines all...this was about Christmas...decided to go skiing in Andorra, which was in my consular district. It was not under the Embassy. I was the only one who had real official access to Andorra, although I didn't even have an exequatur because of the conflict between the two “princes.” Anyway, many of the Marines had never been on skis before and kept cracking themselves up by skiing into boulders and that sort

of thing. There also was substantial damage to one of the hotels there, which created a bit of a problem for us.

I had an excellent admin officer at that time so we avoided the regulations saying any claims over a certain amount had to be referred to Washington but by breaking down every claim below that amount we paid them off in small sums avoiding delays of several years. Nevertheless the end result was that we owed a certain debt to the Andorran people in principle, PR.

Some time later the Department sent me a very thin, little silk Andorra flag that had been carried by one of the Apollo missions to the moon with instructions to present it to the people of Andorra on a suitable occasion. So on the next occasion the 6th Fleet show band scheduled a visit to Barcelona, I suggested taking the band to Andorra for a needed PR effect while at the same time presenting the Andorran flag that had been to the moon. The event was a tremendous success, although the French government became upset and even tried to stop the performance because I didn't (nor did the representatives of other countries) have an exequatur signed by the French co-prince of Andorra (i.e. the President of France). By the same token, there were no exequaturs signed by the Spanish co-prince (i.e. the Bishop of Leo de Urgel) either. But the show went on.

Q: You were saying that the Embassy more or less let you...

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, they were very good. The Ambassador used to love to come up there and we would put on various events including tours around Catalonia.

Q: Then you came back in 1974 to serve in ARA for five years.

ZIMMERMANN: That is right. I really didn't have an assignment when I came back. I had interviews with the Inspection Corps, with Ken Young and also with Bill Bowdler in ARA. Bill said, “We want you to take over Brazilian affairs. You have Portuguese and we think it will be great.” It looked pretty good to me, I didn't see anything else on the horizon at that

point. I had not ever been in Brazil before, and I had to do my homework fast. There was an excellent Ambassador at the other end, John Crimmins. It was a great assignment and I really enjoyed it. There were many problems and it was a very busy time.

It became even busier when the office became responsible for all East Coast Affairs including Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. We were having problems over nuclear facilities in Brazil and the military agreements were going a little sour because of friction on nuclear matters. They also wanted a lot more military aid than we were prepared to give them at that point. Also, as I say the dirty war was going on in Argentina and Uruguay.

Q: The dirty war being?

ZIMMERMANN: The dirty war was referred to the atrocities committed by both the military government and the opposition. There were hidden massacres and burials at night that nobody knew about. People were abducted and never heard from again. People were dropped out of planes over the river. It was a very dirty war.

At one point Robert Hill was Ambassador there. I stayed with him usually when I went to Buenos Aires. I remember riding with him with four lead cars and two behind. It was that bad in terms of threats against Americans who were accused of being too sympathetic with the “opposition”.It was a very dirty problem. Obviously the human rights organizations here were very much up in the air, and, of course, we were too. The Carter administration properly placed great emphasis on human rights. There was great pressure from the White House on these things.

Q: Basically you had military governments in all three countries.

ZIMMERMANN: That is true, and Stroessner had been in Paraguay since 1955.

Q: And Uruguay had a military government?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes.

Q: I think it is very interesting to look at the impact of the human rights policy during Carter on the Foreign Service and its almost visceral reaction about how this sort of upsets all sorts of other things. I think we have learned to live with it. But this was the beginning. Did you and your colleagues have trouble adjusting to this major emphasis on something... ?

ZIMMERMANN: I don't think any of us held any objection to this being a real goal in our foreign policy. I think what gave many of us problems was that it became almost the only goal in some ways. It certainly became a predominant goal and other means of achieving ends were sort of left in limbo.

Q: Did you find yourself going head-to-head with Pat Derian, head of the Human Rights office, or others in her office?

ZIMMERMANN: No, you didn't go head-to-head with Pat Derian. Our Assistant Secretary was very careful on this score. We followed his lead. Fred Rondon, who was my Argentine Desk officer and later my deputy, had the most contact with Pat Derian. In fact he accompanied her on a trip down to Argentina. He was a good man for it and was bilingual in Spanish and could help out a great deal with Pat. He also had good rapport with her, I think, given the circumstances. We took our lead from the Assistant Secretary really on how to play this.

Q: How did this translate with relations? Was it one of these things where we would go up and say you have to be more human rightish and then go on our way and nothing would happen but we had made our bid?

ZIMMERMANN: My opinion is that our representations seldom led anywhere in Uruguay or Argentina, certainly not in Argentina. In Argentina, one feels half out of the real world.

There is a feeling of being isolated from world events. Certainly, they, in their own activities felt that; they didn't give a damn about opinion elsewhere.

Q: They can live off their own resources.

ZIMMERMANN: Exactly. We tried hard. I mean the violations were so egregious that it wasn't hard to be in support of human rights, believe me. The violations were incredible, including by the Tupamaros in Uruguay. We may have had a slightly restraining role in Uruguay in some cases, but not a great success.

Q: How about with Brazil and human rights?

ZIMMERMANN: Human rights was a factor in Brazil...the death squads and so forth. But violations had tapered off as an issue in some way versus what it had been earlier, and certainly Brazil in this respect was way over-shadowed by Uruguay and Argentina. But there were still problems. We got wind of violations less than we did in Argentina. Information came from interviews with people who had been released from prison some time later. Also, we had other fish to fry in Brazil, including the nuclear issue, because they were by far the most advanced in nuclear research, etc., and were dickering with the Germans.

Q: What was the issue on the nuclear side that got us so involved?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, the issue was basically what their ultimate intentions were. We discouraged the production of enriched uranium, which we tried to keep away from most countries. Were their goals just nuclear power and research or were they intent on developing military uses?

We had a similar problem with the Argentines. We were very concerned. They would not let us see their reactors except from a distance. But the issue didn't come up as sharply as it did in Brazil because Brazil was dickering with German firms for plutonium

enrichment equipment and processes. In the end, the German processes did not prove very successful as I remember. I think they were systems that had not really been proved in themselves and as far as I know, did not prove to be very useful to the Brazilians either. It cost a lot of money and time and plus bad relations for a while.

Q: Brazil, unlike most of the other Latin American countries, hasn't really fought any wars with anybody for a long time. Why would it want a bomb?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, Brazil sent troops to fight with us in World War II and were the only Latin Americans that did.

Q: Yes, and they fought the Italian campaign. But you don't have a feeling that the Brazilians are after slices of territory. What would they use a bomb for?

ZIMMERMANN: Argentina. This was the big rival on the continent and they were aware that the Argentines were also pursuing nuclear development.

Q: Was it the feeling that the Argentines are messing around with nuclear things so we better have one ourselves?

ZIMMERMANN: That was the feeling on both sides, absolutely.

Q: You look at the map and you would say that you would have a real hard time making much of...they abut on each other in a relatively small area of little consequence.

ZIMMERMANN: Uruguay was established as a buffer state. I think in Brazil's case it was a little more than that, however. In Brazil it was a question of being a big power. They always wanted to be considered a big power, particularly by the US, and pointed at us and said we didn't treat them as a big power. The nuclear aspect was the mark of a big power and therefore they wanted to develop this. I think that was a very major part of the consideration.

Q: How did you evaluate our Embassies? Were we well represented in those countries?

ZIMMERMANN: Well, I think under John Crimmins the Embassy was very strong in Brazil. He was a top professional to my mind. In Uruguay, Larry Pezzulo, who was Ambassador when I left ARA, was excellent and worked very hard. His predecessor was not under the same pressures, so I think a comparison might be unfair.

In Paraguay Landau did a very good job for a number of years. I visited there twice. I flew back with the body of the Ambassador who died here and saw Stroessner a couple of times. It was a very low key operation compared with events in neighboring countries.

I think Hill did a good job in Argentina although I know he was controversial. I was never that closely involved with Raul Castro ...from Arizona I believe. I took him through his paces here before he went down, but I did not have that much of a feeling later.

Q: Carter did speak some Spanish. Was there more interest in ARA during his administration?

ZIMMERMANN: I don't know. Obviously Kennedy had an interest with his Alliance for Progress program. I think Johnson was so involved in the Vietnam business that he probably didn't have a whole lot of time for it, at least as far as I remember...I was on the Far East side at that point. I think Carter had a genuine interest in Latin America. He had Bob Pastor as his NSC guy for Latin America affairs.

Q: Did Rosalynn Carter make a trip to Latin America?

ZIMMERMANN: Yes, she went to Brazil for an inauguration that the President could not attend. I don't think the Brazilians appreciated her visit properly. I think that was unfair, but again it was the old Latin machismo. She got very involved in human rights down there too, which didn't endear her to the government.

Q: You retired when?

ZIMMERMANN: In February 1979.

Q: What have you been doing since?

ZIMMERMANN: That fall they were setting up the new FOI (Freedom of Information) office and I started working with the first team. After about a year and a half or so, Larry Pickering wanted me to join the historic document review center...it was sort of a Bangkok mafia. So I moved down there and am still working down there insofar as the salary cap permits me.

But aside from that, most of my work during the past five years has been with the Intelligence Community Staff on the HUMINT committee. That was broken up as of July under Gates. My contract is being kept alive until they decide how this settles down, whether they even want any contractors back. The HUMINT office is being moved out to Langley and the other divisions of the old Intelligence Community Staff are being parceled out elsewhere. I did mostly projects that had to do with Latin American and the Iberian Peninsula.

Q: Okay. I want to thank you very much.

End of interview